

MARRIAGE IN HUNZA

Where a couple are definitely ill-matched, or the daughter-in-law fails to fit into the family scheme, the regrettable fact is faced, the two families meet to arrange a divorce, and each party is free to remarry and hope for better luck. Nothing, however, in our Hunza observations amazed us more than the amicable relations that normally prevailed among the women of a household. There would be a mother-in-law with three or four sons' wives, all perhaps with growing families about them, an adolescent girl or two, and the herd of youngsters. They work together from dawn to dusk without argument or re-crimination, and apparently without anyone's attempting to shirk her fair share of the common tasks.

An expectant mother works on in house and field till the very last, but by common consent the heavier tasks are divided amongst the others, and an extra-nourishing ration is assigned to her both before and after the baby's birth. There is no sentimental pampering of the mother, but her immediate job is the baby, and she is expected naturally to concentrate on that. When a woman's monthly affliction overtakes her, she dresses in her oldest clothes and lies immobile by the fire till she is well again. The others make *deudo* for her, a porridge of flour well boiled in water, which is reputed very sustaining, and bring it to her, saying, "Sister, eat." After two days she is herself again, takes a bath, washes her clothes, and sweeps the house; but she is not banished as a pariah nor subject to any degrading superstitions nor to any taboo not imposed by nature.

Shyly one day my friend Zénaba asked me was it true that white women were immune from monthly trouble. "We notice that English ladies seem to ride and camp at all times; we have never heard of one of you having to lie up." I explained our habits and conventions, and that we made it our pride to carry on outwardly unruffled. "But surely it can't be good for you?" "I don't believe it is; but there you are; it is our custom, and we should think it shame if the household noticed any difference in our behaviour. It sometimes makes us cross and fretful perhaps, and then our menfolk just think how unreasonable women are." She laughed heartily: "So that's how it is; we've always wondered; but I think our way is better."

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● 841 "I'm sure it is," said I, "and you are well again in two days, whereas our discomfort lasts twice as long."

880 So I betrayed to them some of our minor secrets, but I could not bear to reveal to these innocent, clean-minded people the cankers of our vaunted civilization: the dark, unanswered questions that cloud our childhood (in this matter there is nowadays, thank God, much more, though still only sporadic enlightenment); the too-long postponed marriage; the wide-spread sex-starvation; the so-called wild oats of so many young men; prostitution, unmarried motherhood, or the unwanted celibacy of so many young women; the secret, second establishments of so many respectable fathers of families; the sordid adulteries that lead to the divorce court—all the tangled mal-adjustments of our modern life in the West, where insane economics have trampled the humanities in the dust.

864 One of my gravest disappointments in Hunza was that for all my free and easy intercourse with the womenfolk I was not able to glean much of the more intimate detail of their married life: of their pregnancies and child-bearing and the like, from the woman's point of view. I had hoped to be able in such matters to offer a useful complement to David's masculine researches, but in fact he learned far more than I did. I rarely or never got a chance to speak to an older woman alone, or quietly, for any length of time; friends, relations, children, and babies were always buzzing round. There is no false prudery in Hunza, and children know the basic facts of life from infancy and hear grown-up discussion on any topic under heaven; but there is great fastidiousness and decency in speech, and it would have required far more subtle knowledge of their conventions than I possessed to have framed my questions inoffensively, even if I had mustered the nerve to frame them at all.

000 This mattered the less that DL in his quiet *shu-à-shu* in the study, with his various informants, was able to go into all such matters with unembarrassed freedom. I had also hoped to be perhaps allowed to be present at the birth of a child, and to this end had taken a superficial course of study at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, which, as things turned out, I had no

- 841 *gofj* pl. *gofjents*, EOL -*ints*, x hut, shed.
 — *karkarmotas gofj* a hen-house.
gofj.ulo in the hut, etc. *burt yonikiš*
ovotas gofj.en bim there was a very
 evil uninhabitable(?) hut. 112.12.
 Cp. 114.6, 9, 25.

This is said to refer to a hut in which it was formerly the practice to isolate women for seven days during menstruation. This practice has been abandoned and women only bathe according to the prescriptions of the Shera' law and use separate bedding for 3 or 4 days.

- ooo *gots.haras, gots.hare*, Ppa. *nokutšor* to walk, go on, proceed, pass, flow, H.
Alma — *šura gotsaras šisan* a man who is a good goer, walker. *tsordine je gotsarčam* I shall go on tomorrow. 128.2, 17. *tsordinər dar numan gotsaruman*. *Nokutšor* . . . *bulšor doriqaltuman* getting up in the morning they proceeded on their way. Proceeding . . . they came to the spring. 128.5. *gotsarčume gotsarčume* going on and on. 244.10. *dori.a dal na gotsarimi ke* . . . when the river flows uphill . . . 142.27. 8.6, 22.12, 36.3, 134.8, 144.3, 244.1, 373.10.

gots x pl., eg. *goss*, cp. *khine*, v. §§ 135, 136.

Demonstrative Adj. and Pron. these, these ones. — *gots bəlt uyam bi.en* these apples are sweet.

gotsil v. *gotsil*.

gotsimo v. 1. **-tsimo*, Cp. § 127., III., from thee.

guy'a -liq h witness. — *u.e gwoartiq datsə* bring them as witnesses. 80.15.

Prs.

gowsari y evidence, testimony. — *awsə gowsari aciti bi* my heart gives u.e